

Occupational safety and health in brief

Why is occupational safety important?

The health and fitness for work of workers must be protected. Measures must be taken to avoid accidents and illnesses.

We must not overlook the fact that it is not only in the workplace that we can encounter hazards, but also at home, in the kitchen, in the garden, in the workshop or even in school technology lessons.

In summer, when we pick apples or sell newspapers, we need to think ahead about the rules we should follow to protect our health and safety.

While we are responsible for ensuring that we do not injure ourselves when tinkering or cleaning at home for example, in the workplace it is the employer who has to ensure that workers are protected. The employer has a duty to comply with health and safety rules, but we also need to know and apply the same.

What are the risks we may be exposed to?

Vehicles (e.g. cars, tractors, forklifts) can roll over or hit you, you can fall on a slippery surface, sharp surfaces, edges and corners can cause injuries, hot objects can cause burns, frozen objects can cause

frostbite, you can fall from a height or fall into a hole. Heat, cold weather, draught, airborne dusts (e.g. asbestos, quartz dust), chemicals, noise or vibration, bacteria, viruses can cause damage to health.



In the event of an injury at work, we talk about an **accident at work**.

Please remember that All accidents at work must be reported immediately to the workplace manager.

Various hazardous substances can cause **health hazards**. Examples include adhesives, paints, varnishes, thinners, and cleaning agents. These should normally be used in well-ventilated areas and kept away from food and drink.

Prolonged work in noisy working environments (e.g. with or near concrete breakers, excavators, chainsaws) can lead to hearing loss. The law specifies the noise levels for which hearing protection (earmuffs, earplugs) must be worn.

When moving loads by hand, particular attention must be paid to the correct posture. There are a number of factors that increase the risk of back injury (e.g. the load is too heavy, there is no grip).



Any illness caused by occupational hazards (e.g. noise-induced hearing loss, chemical dermatitis) is called an occupational disease. The disease may occur up to several years after the completion of work.

Suspected cases of occupational disease are reported by the doctor to the occupational safety and health authority.

The employer must make sure that workers are medically fit for the job and must send them for a **medical fitness assessment** before starting, and at specified intervals after starting work.

All workers must be familiarised with the knowledge and rules of the job in question as part of their **health and safety training**.

Care must also be taken to ensure that the temperature is appropriate for the work, taking into account the nature of the work (i.e. different temperatures must be ensured in an office, a warehouse or even an iron foundry) and the seasons (cold, hot).

Workers working outdoors (construction, agriculture, etc.) are exposed to extreme weather events which can cause cold and chilling, frostbite, sunstroke, heat stroke, dehydration and skin cancer. In addition, the risks of bee, wasp and tick stings and allergenic plants should also be considered.

In outdoor workplaces, especially during heatwaves, adequate hydration and rest time in the shade are important.



Protective equipment plays an important role in the protection of workers, which serves the protection of all workers working in the work area, providing **collective protection**. This includes, for example, protective covers, which are designed to prevent any contact with sources of danger (e.g. moving parts).



Do you need rails here?

An important principle is that collective protection takes precedence over **individual protection**. This means that, for example, at a construction site, falls from a height should be prevented primarily by means of guardrails that protect several people at the same time. If, for some reason this is not possible, workers must wear safety harnesses and be anchored to a safe point with safety ropes, but this only protects the persons wearing the protective equipment and only if they use it correctly.

Another example of collective protection is the use of extraction equipment, which is designed to extract harmful substances (chemicals, dust, etc.) from the worker's environment. In the absence of this, **personal protective equipment**, i.e. respiratory protection, must be used.

Different personal protective equipment must be used to protect different parts of the body against different hazards (e.g. goggles, face masks, mouth masks, gloves, protective boots, safety helmets, etc.)



Wearers must be trained in the use of personal protective equipment, as it will not provide protection if used incorrectly.



Safety and health signs help to identify sources of danger. These signs can be in the form of prohibition, warning or order signs, first aid or escape signs, and fire information signs.

Order sign:



Safety glasses must be worn!

Warning sign:



Caution, corrosive material!

Prohibition sign:



No unauthorised persons allowed!

Always make sure that the tool or other work equipment is intact and not damaged. If it is damaged or defective, it is forbidden to use it, as it can easily be the source of an accident. Take extra care with power tools!

Work equipment must only be used for its intended purpose and in accordance with the instructions for use.



Damaged extension leads

Do not leave operating equipment unattended! Unless the machine is intended for unattended operations.

There are certain machines that may only be operated if you have the necessary licence to operate them. These include forklift trucks, cranes, chainsaws, etc. Certain work may not be carried out without the appropriate qualifications (e.g. electric installations, gas appliance installations).

Ladders are often used to reach high places, for example when picking fruit. The ladder must be stable and placed on firm, stable and non-slippery ground.



Example of a regular ladder

Care must always be taken to ensure that there is adequate space for movement, but also that there are no objects on the workplace floor or in the traffic routes that could obstruct work, traffic or pose a tripping hazard. Slipping hazards should be eliminated as soon as possible.

Escape routes and emergency exits must always be left clear so that in the event of danger (e.g. fire), the shortest route of escape can be taken.

As an employee, we may refuse to follow the instructions of a supervisor if our own safety might be endangered by carrying out work.

However, **we are obliged to refuse**, if our activities would endanger the safety of others.

What emergency number to call in cases of danger?

Ambulance 104

Fire brigade 105

Police 107

Single European emergency number 112

It is very important to follow health and safety rules not only in workshops and workplaces, but also when doing housework and DIY at home.

Information on occupational safety and health issues related to **summer student work** can be found on the website <https://mvff.munka.hu/> of the Department for Occupational Safety and Health Management of the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (NEWS menu item 06.06.2021).

A list of the most relevant legislation to occupational health and safety is also available on the internet website <https://mvff.munka.hu/>.